

## **WETLAND AND COASTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION MEETING NOTES 07-18-06**

1. Welcome- GD
2. Around the room (and on the phone) introductions- Everyone
3. Brief overview of EPA GOMP grant solicitation – AP
  - a. New deadline of July 31, 2006
  - b. No match required
  - c. Based primarily on Governors' Action Plan
  - d. Review process TBD
- 3a. Other funding opportunities
  - i. 3 RFPs through NOAA Restoration Center –
    1. all restoration related
    2. priorities of the Alliance will be favorably reviewed
    3. primarily opportunities for on-the-ground work
  - ii. Minerals Management Service - Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP)
  - iii. EPA region 6 meeting w/ state agencies to discuss wetland issues and management
  - iv. LA DNR funding
  - v. Other EPA opportunities?
  - vi. ACOE? (Will follow up)
  - vii. CB – USFWS service administers many grants – mainly handled through the states clearly for coastal wetlands
    - Coastal Wetland Grant Program (administered through states; NGOs have to go through the states)
    - Partners for Fish and Wildlife
    - Coastal Program
    - Wildlife Refuges
4. Grant proposals currently in the works by this group
  - JWW – There is no funding currently available to achieve Goal R-1, Action 2 (Page 17 in GAP, Page 6 in the EPA GOMP RFP), hosting workshops; states will need help from Fed partners to facilitate these, fund these.
  - QRD – this will be addressed in a proposal from Gulf of Mexico Foundation, but there are many more workshops that need to be developed (freshwater inflow, sediment management).
  - JWW - Currently developing a proposal with Dave Busan to do the freshwater inflow workshop.
  - GD – The states have already planned a series of workshops to discuss what the issues and priorities are, how they have been addressed and potentially solved, or not. From there, other workshops that forward other action items can be developed.
  - There is a need to have more than just one comprehensive workshop.

- QRD - All the work preceding the workshops is critical to their success, so proposals should address individual workshops rather than one comprehensive one.
- BJ (FL Conflict Resolution Center - FSU) – A process that succeeded in FL, Everglades Restoration Project, included the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and a Governor’s Commission, resulted in a Congressionally authorized Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Thinking about submitting a proposal to EPA GOMP RFP w/university programs in TX, AL and some national consensus building organizations focusing on convening a representative stakeholder team to focus on restoration strategies:
  - Using online surveys and interviews in English (and Spanish)
  - Considering doing a sequence of community workshops
  - May be workshops appended to this team that discusses how this group is working to develop consensus on this issue re cross-state and regional issues.
- JWW – There is a need to address both technical issues and policy issues. This group is trying to address policy issues. Are they considering writing a proposal?
- BJ – Yes. Will try to incorporate Mexican states as well.
- KG – Build upon the GAP as is, so FSU has a good start with this.
- BJ – Also need to consider Hab ID group
- JWW – Overlapping objectives should be considered in order to eliminate duplicative processes (i.e., workshops could examine multiple priority issues).
- QRD – Not clear yet how all the actions tie together.
- CC - Consider that the Alliance is supposed to be doing what BJ is describing.
- BJ – Is the right role for this type of team advisory?
- KG – Alliance doesn’t need another stakeholder group to provide input, because the actions defined in GAP are state-led. Development of the GAP as it is today was based on previous community workshops & stakeholder input.
- JWW – Would like to see the states look at what’s good/bad in federal agencies and see how they should (not) be incorporated in the Gulf states.
- GD – This should focus on implementing GAP through workshops describing how people have already tried various methods – and what did or did not work. Fine-tuning the machine.
- Restoration’s cut in the EPA GOMP RFP should be about \$600,000 if funds are distributed evenly across the five priority issues.
- RR – What is the state mandate?
- MB – Don’t see an inventory of what’s out there already – e.g. ACOE is doing intensive study in Lake Okechobee, another coastal FL... and assumes states are doing things as well. Would like to go “somewhere” to see an inventory of all the actions that are happening to define what holes need to be filled in an effort to focus the team.

- RR – Need to have a more centralized inventory than scattered ones that are already out there.
- CC – GAP does pull together a lot of the pieces (inventories, coordinating actions between partners), but not a lot of projects that are about or will lead to restoration on-the-ground. Would like to have projects that when implemented may show that this is what we did and if you do it, it might work in your backyard too.
- RS – The big document (Plan of action outline from Aug. 2005) has much more in it...but the GAP was distilled down so that goals can be accomplished in the 3 years. They are focused on defining what's out there and figuring out what needs to be done next.
- MS – One specific case study could provide an example.
- JWW – Each state is different – and problems in one state may be unique to that state (e.g. FL)...so other 4 states will support FL in addressing its specific problem. The process should be more comprehensive than just looking at what we have in common.
- DL - Talking with Hab ID group -- perhaps PHINS system can be used as a tool for the inventory system.
- BJ – Policy roadblock not mentioned in EPA RFP, and language is incorporated in EPA RFP about wetlands and identifying ways to fund conservation efforts. Is EPA looking to narrow down plan or was it just an abbreviation? Original document (plan of action outline) is different from GAP and from EPA RFP – so what's actually prioritized in the EPA RFP?
- CB – Need to focus on what we want to have come out of EPA RFP, but in the bigger picture, there are more tools available. Concerned that there is not intrastate coordination because there are big pots of money designated to the states already for wetlands restoration. Two major publications have been released that discuss the status of wetlands restoration: Conserving America's Wetlands 2006 – Two Years of Progression Implementing the President's Goal (by CEQ) report just released; and Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States 1998 – 2004 (USFWS) - just released as well.
- RA – Previously awarded GOMP funds for on-the-ground work, therefore concerned that RFP limits awards to implementing GAP actions that are primarily planning workshops.
- KG – This is an opportunity for GMP to support states doing a regional program. This is a way to address commonalities and move forward.
- DE – There are other funding sources out there that can address on the ground stuff (e.g. CIAP).
- GD – Working to make processes that already exist, better. e.g. – Q.D. turned a project into on-the-ground in months rather than years. Wants to see dirt moved, too.
- KG – Alliance process is concerned with policy issues and presents an opportunity to talk about regional policy issues.

- QRD – Priority should be addressing how to get more money to the region.
- MB – The inventory is a product listed in the original document.
- LB – 1985 resource book as basis for current efforts.
- JWW – Should be a topic of discussion with EPA after proposal deadline has passed.
- DJ – Purpose of breakout is to talk about other resources.
- RS - Who's going to review the proposals?
- CL - Will get answer at lunch.
- JWW – Hope EPA will be flexible in review process.
- CL - What are actual proposals going to EPA GOMP RFP?
- QRD – Facilitation of coordination workshop(s).
- JWW – Freshwater inflows.
- BJ – Maybe collaborating?

#### 1:30pm Session

- CL - Visiting Hab ID group at 2pm.
- CB – Number of people (federal partners & NGOs) weren't present at the Restoration meeting, so not everything got discussed. Thought that this meeting was supposed to be where we went through the commitments.
- QRD – Meeting was originally planned to bring state partners together and it grew over the course of conference calls.
- RS – There was confusion about meetings.
- QRD – Communication issues that led to the confusion.
- CL – After the Biloxi meeting, there are now efforts underway to improve communication – getting info out to a broader group of people from the beginning.
- Who is the core group, and how will it be run? Is the core team established?
- GD - Emphasis in having state folks there, but not just state government.
- KG – Hope to have all interested parties involved.
- GD – The core team is established in that it's the members from the states.
- CB – Are we reinventing the matrix, or working with what was already decided?
- AP – See it more as a fleshing out of additional people.
- GD – For people who weren't in Biloxi, this is an opportunity to get involved.
- CL – Today is more about bringing in new people.
- KGB – Is this an issue in other groups in that stakeholders weren't incorporated from the beginning?
- KG – Not asking for recommitment, but rather a process of refining. Want to be inclusive, but not chaotic.
- DE – Do all NGOs have to sit in the core group?
- BG – For today, define the next steps that need to be completed in order to determine who the new partners will be.
- CC – Don't see the on-the-ground work in the GAP.

- BG – Bring together the restoration team user needs and Hab ID group to target what will be focused on. This still needs to be defined.
- CC - How does a state (e.g. AL) that doesn't have a major crisis fit in?
- BG – In AL, the benefit of participating in the process may be in streamlining regulatory and funding mechanisms. This project is bigger than the individual states; it's about the ecosystem. So, it may not be focused towards one state, but towards the region.
- DY – Attempt to identify and educate other people?
- BG – Some of the actions that are up here have been around for 20 years, but have not been completed. The goal is to determine how to get which of these completed.
- RA – Want to move dirt!
- BG – The stated actions are what the states decided they wanted as the priorities.

Break to move over to Hab ID group

3:30-5:00pm session –

R1.A1

- Initial team established at June 2006 Biloxi workshop. Members to be added as needed.
  - KGB - Other potential players: Restore America's Estuaries and regional member groups Galveston Bay Foundation, Tampa Bay Watch and Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. Also, in Texas and other producing states county judges control CIAP money and other money (MMS can give info on formula for distributing money). Louisiana - local parishes control part of the CIAP money and other money - ask to see how interested they might be in joining the restoration team. Harris County and Galveston County may be interested (TX).
  - KG - Need to consider that the people joining the team will need to attend multiple meetings; need to take care in inviting the right people.
  - What about public sector? Business, environmental, community organizations?
  - Developing a team to help implement the actions - not develop an entirely new set of actionable items.
  - For each action item, need to bring in the people with appropriate expertise.
  - Biloxi team needs to be included and allowed to comment on this discussion.
  - Don't want to preempt but want to give them information.
  - Need to get MS Dept Marine Resources Preserves Program (perhaps Tim Clark or Dave Ruple).

R.1. A.2. -

- GD - Will host but LA has no money.
- What about using the RFP? Is this the kind of thing that the RFP is looking for?
- These are state meetings to talk about what's happening in each state. Who needs to be invited?
- Need a contractor to help determine how many meetings, who needs to be there.
- Perhaps include the Hab ID people.

AP – Answers to earlier questions about RFP: Review for proposals still to be determined – but the states will be consulted; the things left out of the RFP are left out intentionally – these are things that EPA does not have a statutory authority to fund. EPA needs to have statutory authority to fund a project type in order to be able to fund a proposed project.

QRD will coordinate with Lee Yokel re: Education Group.

LY presented restoration messages that education brainstormed for restoration group.

- What is restoration and why I should I care?
- How can I be involved in habitat restoration?
- How can I be prepared and what are the risks of natural hazards and what is a natural hazard?

BW – talked about having the 5 states define which are the most important restoration projects and speaking together to congress... MS Governor requested this.

Conference call in the first week of August; request a state review of the matrix before the call and this will be discussed on the call.

Remainder of discussion of 07-18-06 and 07-19-06 is captured in Implementation Activities Matrix.